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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/645,440

08/20/2003

Bruce J. Thompson

40134.0001US11

7989

23552 7590 12/08/2008

MERCHANT & GOULD PC

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MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55402-0903

EXAMINER

BOYCE, ANDRE D

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3623

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

12/08/2008

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/645,440

Applicant(s)

THOMPSON ET AL.

Examiner

Andre Boyce

Art Unit

3623

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period **will** apply and **will** expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply **will**, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 02 September 2008.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-12, 14-16, 18-21 and 25-40 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-12, 14-16, 18-21 and 25-40 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 20 August 2003 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date: _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

1. This Final office action is in response to Applicant's amendment filed September 2, 2008. Claims 1, 5, 18, 25, 30, 31 and 38 have been amended. Claims 13 and 22-24 have been canceled. Claim 40 has been added and claims 1-12, 14-16, 18-21 and 25-40 are pending.
2. The previously pending claim objections have been withdrawn.

The previously pending rejections to claims 13 and 22-24 under 35 USC §101 have been withdrawn.
3. Applicant's arguments, filed September 2, 2008, have been fully considered and are persuasive.

Specification

4. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities: The Related Applications section should be updated to include USPN 7,457,765. Appropriate correction is required.

Drawings

5. The drawings are objected to because figures 6-23, 26-29 and 32-52 are screen shots which include gray shading, not black and white lines only, as required. See 37 CFR 1.84. Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are

Art Unit: 3623

required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

6. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

7. Claims 1-12, 14-16, 18-21 and 25-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Art Unit: 3623

Claim 1 recites the limitations "the scheduling module" and "the plurality of patients." There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Claims 2-12, 14-16 and 18-21 are rejected since they depend therefrom.

Claim 25 recites the limitations "the scheduling module." There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. Claims 26-29 are rejected since they depend therefrom.

Double Patenting

8. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

9. Claims 1, 25, 30 and 38 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-6 of U.S. Patent No. 7,457,765 (hereafter Thompson et al). Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other.

Independent claims 1 and 25 in the current application recite a method of scheduling employees in a health care environment, including inter alia, (i) determining in a computer system the employees' patient care capability over

Art Unit: 3623

intervals of their shift, wherein at least one employee is not capable of performing direct patient care duties for an entire shift; (ii) counting employees at a fractional number based at least upon the employees' training and a predetermined patient care capability resulting in scheduling employees in non-whole number increments; and (iii) rounding up a total amount of employees needed when a determination by the scheduling module results in a fractional number of employees needed to address the needs of the plurality of patients, as seen in claim 1 of Thompson et al. Moreover, claim 1 includes additional steps of for each patient, evaluating patient care requirements, wherein the patient care requirements correspond to actual employee time requirements necessary to satisfy the patient care requirements; in response to the patient care requirement evaluation, adjusting scheduling time of at least one patient to distribute the corresponding employee time requirements throughout a predetermined time period, as similarly seen in claim 1 of Thompson et al. In addition, claim 25 includes compiling a plurality of patient and employee profiles, each used in determining the patient care capability, as seen in claim 1 of Thompson et al. As a result, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Thompson et al to encompass the limitations as seen in claims 1 and 25.

Claim 30 is rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting, since it is the system claim, corresponding substantially to method claim 1 in Thompson et al.

Art Unit: 3623

Claim 38 is rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting, since it is the graphical user interface claim, corresponding substantially to method claim 1 in Thompson et al.

Conclusion

10. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

11. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Andre Boyce whose telephone number is (571)272-6726. The examiner can normally be reached on 9:30-6pm M-F.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Beth Boswell can be reached on (571) 272-6737. The fax phone

Art Unit: 3623

number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Andre Boyce/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3623
December 5, 2008